



FAVORED LOVERS, TENDER maidens, hearts that feel affection's blaze,
Listen to a Christmas story of our old colonial days.
When the Yule log cast its crimson over periwig and sword,
And the children danced "Sir Roger" to the dulcet harpsichord.
In a thrifty little village stood a mansion and a forge;
In the former dwelt a soldier high in favor with King George.
Colonel Geoffrey was large hearted, and his doors were opened wide,
But he drew the line at blacksmiths save at merry Christmas tide.
But true love will scale the barrier 'twixt the wealthy and the poor;
Isabel, the Colonel's daughter, ne'er could pass the smelly door.
But a tear would tell the secret that no maiden lip could speak,
And poor John would say "Good morning" with a blush upon his cheek.
He had much of manly beauty; from his honest brow were rolled
Yellow curls that in the sunlight seemed a crown of richest gold.
On his tongue was merry music, humor sparkled in his eye,
And his only times of sadness were when Isabel passed by.
In the late days of December, one, a stranger, sought her hand;
Means were his and noble station in the far off motherland.
Flattered was the soldier father, and his thanks he scarce could tell;
Christmas eve, he told Lord Curtis, he should wed sweet Isabel.



"JOHN WOULD SAY GOOD MORNING."
Maiden pride was sorely wounded thus so cheaply to be sold,
And she longed to teach his lordship how she valued rank and gold.
Hope unto her heart gave promise father's purpose to defeat.
When the broken hearted Vulcan poured his sorrows at her feet.
She would brave her father's anger, but her lover must reveal
In the winning of her favor ready wit and heart of steel.
Said the smith, "I vow to kiss you first beneath the holly green,
Though the friends of noble Curtis draw a dozen swords between."
There was dancing in the parlor, there was courtship on the stair,
There was plenty in the larder, there was pleasure everywhere;
And the parson preached a sermon which the people could enjoy
When he romped around the table with the miller's little boy.
Rustic wives and dames of polish in their admiration vied,
As the Colonel bade them welcome, on his arm the lovely bride;
And Lord Curtis tapped his snuffbox with a smile of pure delight,
For a score of guests had promised to be cowards—for that night!
Laughter at the bald deception strove against a viceous grin
When the father told the party of his daughter's merry whim;
How, to gain a valiant husband, Isabel had made a vow
To espouse the first to lead her underneath the kissing bough.
Forward stepped a dozen gallants, but Lord Curtis thundered "Stay!"
I will under lead the damsel, though my sword must cut the way!"
"Catch her first, my Lord Fine Feathers!" cried the smith; "my horse is fast!"
And with strong arm thrown about her swiftly from the room he passed.



NEVER DID SUCH CONSTERNATION,
Never did such consternation on a Christmas gathering fall!
Out into the nipping night air rushed the party one and all;
But the only sight to greet them was a gaping village crowd.
Pointing to a speedy horseman flying down the frosty road.



CHRISTMAS CRUSADE OF THE CHILDREN.

Quickly every steed was saddled; father, guests, with hme and cry
Tore along the frozen highway 'neath the moonlit winter sky.
"Tis a madman has my daughter!" bitterly the Colonel cried,
"Daft or sane, his life is forfeit!" hissed the lover at his side.
On they spurred, and soon the catfiff, beaten in a hopeless race,
Reined his sorry beast and waited Colonel Geoffrey's charge to face.
Well in front of all rode Curtis, shrieking, "Draw, you scoundrel, draw!"
And he plunged his thrifty weapon through a hideous thing of straw!
Underneath its hat, tied firmly, teeth of snow white paper grinned;
On its coat sleeve, idly flapping, was this note, securely pinned:
"As you read this modest billet, (how Lord Curtis ground his teeth!)
Isabel and I stand, wedded 'neath the festive holly wreath!"
When the valorous pursuers galloped up, the game to bag,
Nothing saw they in the moonlight save a broken winded nag.
Soon they found a prostrate figure hacked by an infuriate sword,
And they found a crumpled letter, but they never found my lord!

Geoffrey trotted home in silence, he—a soldier to the core—
Could but like the clever fellow who'd out-generalled a score.
First was he to reach the parlor, first to cast charge's saddle;
First to pledge an honest bumper to the bridegroom and the bride.



THROUGH A HIDEOUS THING OF STRAW.
Often when the Christmas laughter rang far out upon the snow
Would an old man seek the portal, with his face and pipe aglow;
And whenever his fancy pictured pointing crowd and crouching pair,
He would mutter, "It was lucky that none thought of looking there!"
THOMAS FROST.

Christmas in England.
England surpasses all other countries in the world in the observance of Christmas-tide. In that country it is the custom on Christmas eve, after the usual devotions are over, to light candles and throw on the hearth a huge log called the Christmas Block, and watch it until it has burned to ashes. At Court and in the houses of the wealthy an officer named for the occasion Lord Misrule is appointed to superintend the revels, which are generally carried on until midnight. Candles are usually kept burning for two days. The favorite pastimes indulged in are gaming, music, conjuring, dipping for nuts, hat cockles, blind man's buff and other diversions. Of late years clergymen have discontinued these forms of amusement.

Songs of the Christmas-Tide.
"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men." This is a climax, wrong end first. Let us read it as it runs. Glory will be to God, peace will be on earth, when good-will toward men has its reign. Good-will toward men! If we all had it, if its concrete Christianity held practical sway, what would be the calmes, the petty feelings of to-day?

Crusade of the Children.
On Christmas day in the year 1212, 3,000 children marched from Cologne, France, with flying banners, crucifixes and other evidences of their adherence to the Christian Faith. They were on their way to Palestine where pagan chiefs were ruling the land in which Jesus was born. For centuries the Christians had been sending crusades against the pagans, and this one became famous in history's pages as the Crusade of the Children. The saddest fate possible awaited them. As days passed on storms of wind and rain cut down their ranks.
So, one by one they scattered;
And ever, day by day,
Straying and lost and dying,
The great host ebbed away.
Not for them was the battle;
Not for them was the crown—
The glory of siege and struggle,
Or the victor's green renown.
Time has grown old and forgotten;
Deep buried in dust of years
Are the broken hearts of the mothers
And the children's helpless tears.
And we number the centuries seven
Since they marched by the Rhine away,
But to them, in the holy city,
It counts as a single day.

FAITH IN GOD.
A Christmas Story by Dr. Talmage.
I never like a Christmas season to pass without telling to some one a thrilling incident which happened at my house just eight years ago this coming Christmas. Perhaps I have told it to you, but I think not. We had just distributed the family presents Christmas morning when I heard a great cry of distress in the hallway. A child from a neighbor's house came in to say her father was dead. It was only three doors off, and I think, in two minutes we were there. There lay the old Christian sea Captain, his face upturned toward the window as though he had suddenly seen the headlands, and with an illuminated countenance as though he were just going into harbor. The fact was he had already got through the "Narrows." In the adjoining room were the Christmas presents waiting for his distribution. Long ago, one night when he had narrowly escaped with his ship from being run down by a great ocean steamer, he had made his peace with God, and a kinder neighbor than Capt. Pendleton you would not find this side of heaven.
He had often talked to me of the goodness of God, and especially of a time when he was about to go into New York harbor with his ship from Liverpool, and he was suddenly impressed that he ought to put back to sea. Under the protest of the crew and under their very threat he put back to sea, fearing at the same time he was losing his mind, for it did seem so unreasonable that when they could get

into harbor that night they should put back to sea. But they put back to sea, and Capt. Pendleton said to his mate, "You call me at 10 o'clock at night." At 12 o'clock at night the Captain was aroused and said: "What does this mean? I thought I told you to call me at 10 o'clock, and here it is 12." "Why," said the mate,



"CALL ME AT TEN O'CLOCK."
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"If I did call you at 10 o'clock, and you got up, looked around and told me to keep right on this same course for two hours, and then to call you at 12 o'clock." Said the Captain, "Is it possible? I have no remembrance of that." At 12 o'clock the Captain went on deck, and through the rift of the cloud the moonlight fell upon the sea and showed him a shipwreck with one hundred struggling passengers. He helped them off. Had he been any earlier or any later at that point of the sea he would have been of no service to those drowning people. On board the Captain's vessel, they began to band together as to what they should pay for the rescue, and what they should pay for the provisions. "Ah," says the Captain, "my lads, you can't pay me anything; all I have on board is yours; I feel too greatly honored of God in having saved you to take any pay." Just like him.
Oh, that the old sea Captain's God might be my God and yours. Amid the stormy seas of this life may we have always some one as tenderly to take care of us as the Captain took care of the drowning crew and the passengers. And may we come into the harbor with as little physical pain and with as bright a hope as he had, and if it should happen to be a Christmas morning, when the presents are being distributed and we are celebrating the birth of Him who came to save our shipwrecked world, all the better, for what grander, brighter Christmas-present could we have than heaven?

Christmas Music.
"Or is it the bells who are chanting,
Chanting sweet and low,
A hymn of forgotten childhood,
Lost so long ago?
"Or is it the waifs at my window,
Out in the dawn's gray,
Singing of Bethlehem's manger,
And the Child that was born to-day?"

Yes, it is the sweet childish treble of the waifs, seasonably returning, like the birds of spring, with carols on the wintry morn of the birth of Christ. The snow lying white on the fids, the frost flowers on the pane, sparkle in the early sunlight. Oh! what a thrill to be awakened by those joyously chanted words:
"Hark! the herald angels sing
Glory to the new born king;
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled."
Then there is another sound, outside the door—a sound not so melodious as the chorals, but just as merry and sweet. It is the children in their night dresses, rushing about the house proclaiming the generosity of the good and jolly St. Nick, who has slyly visited the open-mouthed stockings over night.
The morning having flown on wings of sunlight, we find ourselves in the dim church aisles, with the evergreen trimmings and bright hollyberries overhead, and the rich tones of the organ pervading all the place.
More divine music! It is the full-voiced choir, now and their words, "Gloria in Excelsis Deo!"
Stily crown the glad devotion of Christmas day.

Date of Christ's Birth.
The date, Dec. 25, which is celebrated in Christian countries as the anniversary of the birth of Jesus Christ is really not the anniversary of his birth. The precise date of Christ's birth has never been fixed and it is safe to say never will be. December is the rainy season in the land of Judea, and shepherds could not have been in the fields at night in the vicinity of Bethlehem as is related. It is altogether likely that the event took place later. Many Christian churches only celebrate Dec. 25 as a day in memory of the nativity of the Redeemer.

Christmas in Different Lands.
Christmas day as we call it in English speaking countries is known by other names where our language is not spoken. In France it is called Noel from Dies Natalis, in Germany Weihnachtfest, in Scandinavia as Yule and in Saxony as Geol.

THE DAY IN HISTORY.

NOTABLE ANNIVERSARIES THAT FALL ON CHRISTMAS.

The Day That Is Made Merry by the Good, a Day for Crime Among the Wicked—Some Chapters from the World's History.



AT THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE CHRISTIAN ERA, and with no intermission through the long line of the coming centuries up to the present time, newspapers had been published, and had there been any thing like the ambitious rivalry now existing in the matter of getting news, it would be very easy to give a recapitulation of the most notable Christmas day events since the first celebration of the nativity in ancient Judea.

On this memorably merriest day of all the year it is sad, however, to think that the records of notable Christmas day events coming down to us are so largely made up of records of bloodshed, and the savagery of war and riot of the most human passions let loose. Some of these, the most readily recalled, are given below. History happily is sparse in these recitals. The earliest on record runs as far back as the close of the third century, and it is well for our faith in humanity that history furnishes no Christmas day event parallel to this act of atrocious barbarity. A few words tell the tragic story. It was in the reign of Dioclesian, on Christmas day a church in Nicomedia was filled with Christian worshippers. Dioclesian gave orders to bar every egress and set fire to the building. The order was carried out with fiendish cruelty, and not a single worshiper was spared the devouring flames.

Skipping over many centuries we come to the eleventh century in the history of ancient Britain, which, with the history of that country following the Norman conquest, is particularly marked by notable Christmas days. Yuletide in the year 1066 was not a happy one for the English. Harold, the King, had fallen but a few weeks before in the one great battle on which he staked his crown. In the meantime the people had found what it was to have a Norman conqueror for their master. They were stunned by the shock of Harold's overthrow. The coronation of the new King was on Christmas day. The scene of the coronation was Westminster Abbey. The ceremony proceeded. There were soldiers outside to repress any hostile demonstration. When the people in the abbey were asked if they would have William for their King they answered with so loud an acclaim that the soldiers outside, supposing the tumult inside was caused by an attack on the Normans within the church, forthwith set upon the offending people of Westminster, killed large numbers of them and burned and plundered many houses before they could be stopped.

Another Christmas day, two years afterward, was to be still more doleful to the Britons. The people of the northern counties, taking advantage of the disaffection of some powerful northern barons, rose in arms with the intention of throwing off the Norman yoke. They surprised several garrisons and put them to the sword. William marched in person against them. He directed a universal slaughter, that not a human being should be

left living, or beast, and that not a house should be left standing. These orders were carried out with fiendish exactitude, and over 100,000 men, women and children perished by the sword. A mark was set on that Christmas in the northern counties that it took a hundred years to efface.

It was on Christmas day in the year 1170 that Thomas a Becket, the first Englishman who had been promoted to any great office since the conquest, ascended the pulpit of his Cathedral church at Canterbury and preached what may be described as his own funeral sermon. He alluded in terms of reproach and indignation to the treatment the English people were receiving at the hands of their Norman conquerors. The result is well known. "In the name of Christ and for the defence of my church I am willing to die," were his last words to his murderous assailants.

Turning to another Christmas day scene in the year 1214 is a more agreeable picture. In it there is no blood shed. There is an assemblage of knights, prelates and a prince. They have set their hearts on winning a vic-



THE MAGNA CHARTER.
tory, the greatest the nation had won since the Norman conquest—to obtain the signature of King John to the great charter of English liberties. They were before the King in a body. How they pleaded with the King, how the King temporized and put them off till Easter and tried every trick to thwart them, and how finally he was forced to sign the charter, are matters familiar to every one. All in all, England has never had a more creditable Christmas day.

After Richard II., described as the shipping king, who ambled up and down with shallow jesters and rash bavin wife, had been supplanted by King Henry, a plot in which the Earls of Huntingdon, Kent, Surrey and Rutland were the principal conspirators, they having been the special favorites of the de-throned monarch, was concocted to seize and murder, "under pretense of jousting," as historians put it, the new King at Windsor castle, where he was to spend Christmas. Everything was arranged, but the plot was discovered. King Henry was not murdered on that Christmas day, but the heads of the leading conspirators garished the gates of the principal towns of England. The spirit of conspiracy, however, survived, for it is recorded that shortly after "there was found in the King's bedchamber an iron with three sharp pikes, slender and round, standing upright, laid there by some traitor, yet when the King should have lain him down, he might have thrust himself upon them."

At the Christmas Entertainment.



Prestdigitateur—Hal! what have we here? A live rabbit in this boy's pocket! Now, let us see what else he has concealed about him.



Frightened Youth (producing cigarettes and time novel)—Here they are, Mister; that's all I've got—honest!
Santa Claus can hardly be called a saving clause. He comes high, but we must have him.